



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights

- The IM Project accepted the Central Phase of the Northern Tier from Motorola.
- As soon as a last piece of work for the U.S. Air Force is completed on the microwave system, Sheriff Don Brostrom will have Hill County ready to start using the trunked radio system.
- Commissioners Joe Brenneman (Flathead), Dave Reinhardt (Valley), Greg Chilcott (Ravalli), MACo Executive Director Harold Blattie, along with Bill Fleiner (IMGC) and Kevin Bruski (IM Executive Director) attended a NACo-sponsored Interoperability Policy conference in Phoenix, AZ.
- Concrete work for the tower foundation and shelter pad at the Ellis Communications Site in Beaverhead County is complete.
- Harris-Stratex has completed its change-out of transceiver boards on the Northern Tier microwave.
- The U.S. Air Force has completed all infrastructure improvements on its sites within the Central Consortium.
- Kevin Bruski and Ian Marquand gave an IM presentation at the annual MACo conference in Helena and manned an exhibit at the Montana State Fire Chiefs Association Convention.

Central Montana Consortium Members Updated

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Sept. 10 meeting of the Central Montana Interoperability Communications Consortium (CMICC) in Great Falls covered U.S. Air Force (USAF) activities, the USAF Remote Visual Assessment (RVA) Project, radio programming training, and the CMICC meeting schedule.

Dave Hinds reported the USAF is going "full steam ahead" at completing various phases of tower, microwave and antenna installations at sites such as Highwood Baldy, Judith Peak, Garniel, Sullivan, Belgian Hill, South Moccasin and Cooney. Members discussed structuring site power bill payments. The USAF would prefer paying its share of the power bill on an annual basis and to single entity rather than to several different counties or utility companies. Estimates of operational power costs for existing sites are needed. Dave Clouse, IM Project Manager, noted that the MacDonald site power bill runs about \$250 per month. He also suggested that

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the power bills may be proportioned by how many repeaters each partner utilizes.

Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, reported on the RVA Project, which will provide real-time video surveillance of the central Montana missile fields. Equipment is currently being tested on two sites located west and east of Great Falls. Environmental work is underway to determine where fiber optic cable can be trenched and where repeater sites are located. Also, tower structural analysis is taking place to ensure that towers, including South Moccasin and Sullivan, can handle increased loading. Mark indicated that the panel antennas should be up by next spring.

The next topic was radio programming training. Vince Kolar noted that the Great Falls police department needs to order software and cables before training can take place. Dorothy Gremaux will check on training dates.

Cheri Kilby suggested that the consortium meet every two months rather than once a month in an effort to reduce conflicts with other meetings. Cheri noted that the current consortium bylaws only provide voting rights to member counties, and exclude cities, the USAF and tribal partners. She plans to send the bylaws to everyone for review and consideration of voting right expansion in the belief that all partners at the table should have a vote.

The group decided not to meet in October, but will tentatively meet Nov. 18 at a location to be announced.

Eastern Tier Meeting Informative

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

ETIC Chair Denny Palmer, Richland County, began the Sept. 23 Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) meeting with a report on the Sept. IM Project Directors meeting. He reported that Dave Hinds, U. S. Air Force, will assist in arranging an Eastern Tier meeting with Ellsworth Air Force Base representatives to investigate partnership opportunities.

Two ETIC members, Sheriff Tony Harbaugh, Custer County, and Sheriff Rusty Jardee, Carter County, are becoming more involved in Interoperability Montana (IM) activities. Tony has been named to the IM Audit Committee while Rusty has accepted a position on the IM Governance Committee.

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Dawson County Commissioner Jim Skillestad said that Dawson County will be overseeing the construction of the Belle Prairie shelter and tower and will ensure that bills are appropriately directed to the IM Project. Denny said that progress is being made on the order for ETIC repeaters; the order is about a week away from being placed. He also updated the group on the status of towers at Fox Creek and Antelope Butte sites.

Sheriff Jardee described his ideas for ensuring local control of a portion of whatever funds are collected to sustain the IM Project. He emphasized that the IM sustainability plan must be acceptable to end users. Denny and Wing Spooner will be assisting him in a write up of his proposal to be presented at the Oct. 13 IM Governance Committee meeting.

Denny distributed copies of the Lewis and Clark Business Practices that he obtained from Sheriff Leo Dutton, Lewis and Clark County. The document can be used as a starting point or a model for each county. In addition, he stressed that he still needs radio inventory information from all member counties.

Alan Stempel, McCone County, accentuated the need to work collaboratively with Mid-Rivers on possible fiber solutions. Mid-Rivers is currently working on cost figures for fiber, based on maps from the IM, and the IM will have this information in writing soon.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wed., Oct. 21 at the Dawson County Courthouse at 10:00 am.

Progress Reported at Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Mike Linder, Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office and Chair of the Big Sky 11 Technical Committee, started the Sept. 24 Big Sky 11 Consortium meeting in Billings with a report on IM Technical Committee activities as well as local accomplishments. He, Roger Smith, IM Radio System Administrator, and Tom Smith, IM Project Manager, recently performed site walks to the Shane Ridge, Greeno and Dunn Mountain sites. Tower and shelter locations have been staked at some locations and arrangements for moving shelters to sites were planned.

Mike also described construction activities at the Bull Mountain/Majerus Ranch site. Yellowstone County Public Works will be moving the shelter to

the site and assisting with road maintenance. Tom Smith, who participated via teleconference, presented plans for upcoming tower foundation construction work at the Coburn, Dunn and Greeno sites, scheduled for Oct. 1, 5 and 8.

Wing Spooner, PSSB, summarized highlights from the IM Project Directors meeting, while Mark Canton, Motorola, gave a report on acceptance of the Northern Tier. He also updated the group about the second master controller. The detailed design review and upgrade of existing dispatch centers and sites is scheduled to be completed by November. He explained that 7-8 Northern Tier sites will be moved onto the Second Master Controller once it is up and running.

Members learned that a presentation on the City of Billings Radio Assessment results is scheduled on Tues., Oct. 6 from 2-4 at the Billings Fire Station/EOC, 2305 8th Avenue North. The next Big Sky 11 Consortium meeting will take place on Thurs., Oct. 22, at the Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.

Upcoming Meetings

IM Outreach Meetings

http://interop.mt.gov/im_outreach_meetings.mcp

- **Montana Emergency Medical Services Association (MEMSA) 30th Annual Conference**
Billings Hotel and Convention Center, 1223 Mullaney Lane, Billings
Presentation: Fri, Oct. 2 - 3:30 to 5:00 pm
 - 9-1-1 Update, Becky Berger
 - Interoperability Montana (Public Safety Radio) Update, Kevin Bruski
- **DES Fall Conference**
Yogo Inn, 211 E Main St., Lewistown, MT
IM Presentation: Fri., Oct. 9 - 11:30 am

Sept. 28 (Mon.)

IM Technical Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Dr.

Sept. 30 (Wed.)

Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC)
Helena • 10:00 am
State Capitol, Room 152

Oct. 1 (Thurs.)

Northern Tier Consortium
Havre • 9:00 am
Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

Oct. 27 (Tues.)

Technical Assistance Training
Missoula • Holiday Inn Parkside, 200 South Pattee St.

Oct. 28-29 (Wed.-Thurs.)

Montana APCO Conference
Missoula • Holiday Inn Parkside, 200 South Pattee St.
More information at: <http://www.mtapco.org>